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By FRANK P. MACLENNAN.

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"Too proud to fight," eh? Nix on such comedy.

Despite the perils of the U-boats, no less than 400,000 passengers crossed the Atlantic between America and Europe during the year 1915, and of this number 250,000 took passage on vessels owned by European belligerents.

Most of the pictures of Villa that have been printed recently in American newspapers show him to be laughing—and, possibly, at Uncle Sam. But he who laughs last laughs best.

Villa must be a fanatic, one of those dangerously insane persons who is obsessed with the notion that he is a superhero, that nothing is impossible for him to accomplish. His suggestion to Zapata that they join forces to conquer the United States would appear to be all the evidence needed that this is so.

This may be a free country with constitutional mandates that accord liberty to all of its citizens, but a court at Lyons, Kan., has ordered that one of the gentlemen within its jurisdiction shall take a bath twice a week.

As the Chicago Herald suggests, at this early stage of the proceedings both railroad employees and railways should fix firmly in mind the fact that there is a party of the third part always to be considered in the negotiations—and that is the American public.

From the way the wild birds are making merry with their songs, it is apparent that they, at least, are pretty certain spring is here to stay.

At any rate, the spring drive of the American soldiers into Mexico won't be against trenches and 42-centimeter guns. And for which, there is much to be thankful.

One would think that a battle of such tremendous proportions and ferocity as the one around Verdun couldn't continue for as long as three weeks; that mere human beings, no matter what their equipment couldn't stand the strain. But this titanic and terrible struggle has entered on its fourth week and shows no signs of slackening.

Incidentally, the recent touch of mid-summer weather made the "winter ones" mighty uncomfortable, but the magical folk resisted the temptation to take 'em off.

Nor did it take March so long to discard its lion's skin and don the lamb's wool.

The theory that girls in the United States are rapidly becoming brown-haired has been exploded, declares the Christian Science Monitor. At the Kansas State Agricultural college, in Manhattan, there are at present, it is said, no fewer than 100 red-haired girls. No attempt, fortunately is made to explain this interesting circumstance.

In view of the big business that Germany has made for the soldiers of France at Verdun, it is probable that the great "spring drive" which the Allies have been promising in the western arena of the war will be postponed again. It was originally scheduled for the spring of 1915.

CURE FOR THE PORK BARREL.

The one solution of the pork barrel is to take from congress the power of appropriating money bills, at least in the matter of appropriations for local purposes and public works. Frank World's Verk for February. Instead, we should establish the budget system. This would not actually curtail the scope of congress. That body would still retain control of the purse. It would vote money only in obedience to a request from the administrative branch; but it could grant or refuse this request as conditions justified. Its business would be that of criticism, of investigation, and of veto. This would greatly enhance the character of both chambers. It would weed out those members whose re-election depends chiefly on their ability to get

local appropriations—certainly they would be no loss to the nation. The more serious members—and there are plenty of them—who are really interested in the nation's business and would like to spend their time in it, are now tormented constantly by the importunity of their constituents. The budget system would relieve them of this. They would, therefore, have all their time for serious work. Thus the nation would not only save millions of wasted money, but would get a higher type of lawmakers. And the patriotism of localities would find more worthy outlets than campaigns to secure a lot of useless and expensive architecture.

LET'S GET BUSY.

Wherever Topeka or other good roads boosters go in Kansas they find almost everybody in favor of better roads. Then why not get busy and build them? That's the question and an obvious one. But the nubbin of the trouble undoubtedly is that Kansas and her communities are laboring in a veritable labyrinth of laws that must be straightened out, or superseded by one or a series of modern and general road laws that will permit the state and its local divisions to go ahead with their road improvement in the systematic manner that alone will bring about the desired results.

CHILD LABOR IN FIELDS.

In the February issue of the Child Labor Bulletin is an article on "Child Labor in the Sugar Beet Fields of Colorado" which is the first report on a series of investigations of child labor in agriculture which the national child labor committee is now carrying on.

"Child labor" in agriculture has not hitherto received public attention because it has been generally assumed that the child on the farm is in every way more fortunate than the child employed in manufacturing, mining, and trade, and consequently has relatively little or no need of protection.

The report, says the committee, "But 260,195 or 18 per cent of the children 10 to 15 engaged in agricultural work are 'farm laborers working out' which means they are working for persons other than their parents. The possibility of child labor in agriculture is great as to demand a thorough investigation. That many of the laborers on the home farm also are required to do fatiguing work through long periods of seasonal activity, and are at the same time deprived of schooling, is beyond question, as this monograph reveals."

The report estimates that at least 5,000 children between 7 and 15 are employed yearly in the sugar-beet fields of Colorado, and that according to estimates made by the superintendents of schools, they lose two or more school months as a result. That the loss of schooling seriously affects the progress of the child in school is shown by the fact that the average per cent of retardation among the best-workers is 53 as compared with an average of 20 for the non-best-workers. The work the children do in "pulling" and "topping" the beets, as described in the article, involves great physical strain when they work 12 hours a day through out the harvesting season. The report states that compared with the total number of persons engaged in beet culture, the number of children under 14 employed is small and that therefore for the industry would not suffer if they were eliminated.

The report also states that the compulsory education law is not enforced in the beet sections and the report recommends the reorganization of the school system on a county unit instead of a district basis to secure the enforcement of the law by removing it from local influence and thus control the movement of children in the beet fields.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

In the course of his current weekly financial review, Henry Clews, the New York banker, writes: "The European conflict has revolutionized foreign trade, and its effect upon American commerce is becoming more and more pronounced. Whatever happens, the field for American enterprise abroad is bound to enlarge. Not only American products, but American capital is sure to find a larger foreign outlet. Neither England, France nor Germany will be able to finance new ventures in other parts of the world without anything like former freedom of capital to China, Russia, Central Asia and other undeveloped countries. It will require capital in large sums when peace returns, if not before. In some cases their needs are already urgent. This means a big demand for funds for years to come, and the United States for obvious reasons will be the best able to respond. This also means employment for American industry, and will inevitably lead to much greater development of New York as an international banking center. New York is practically rife with reaching and holding second place in the world's financial center, and in some instances will push London hard for preeminence. The great nations of Europe for many years to come must labor under huge debts and impending resources; disasters which this country, thanks to its isolation and peace policy, has fortunately escaped. . . . Domestic business conditions are satisfactory. Our railroads are still overtaxed with traffic, especially those centers at New York. Various modes for relief for congestion have been suggested, such as a diversion of traffic to other ports, a stronger embargo on certain articles of traffic, increased demurrage charges, higher lighters rates, etc. But insufficient emphasis has been placed upon the fundamental fact that the roads are now showing the effects of over-regulation and the consequent discouragement to enterprise and capital out of which alone the necessary facilities for handling freight can be provided. . . . The labor situation is less threatening. Differences in the soft

coal trade have been satisfactorily adjusted and there is reason to believe that trouble in the anthracite region will also be averted. Labor conditions in the coal regions have greatly improved during the last few years, and there is little ground for serious complaints, such as would enlist public sentiment. As to the railroads the outlook is not so promising. The men appear insistent in their demands, which if conceded would increase railroad expenses many millions; some estimates being as high as \$100,000,000. A movement is being started for arbitration, which if it succeeds, will probably settle the difference or postpone final adjustment until late in the spring or the summer months. . . . The March government crop report reflects the big crops of last year, inasmuch as stocks on hand at farms are generally large. This should be a safeguard against any shortage during the coming season. The stocks of wheat on farms are estimated at 90,000,000 bushels ahead of last year—the average price to the farmer, however, being 21 cents less. The amount of corn on farms is estimated at 23,000,000 more than last year, and the price about seven cents less, largely because the merchantable quality was below last year. The oats crop on hand is reported at 216,000,000 bushels more than a year ago, and the price about 10 cents per bushel less."

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"Because, Betty," said her father, "there was no chance that Larry, also might go that way, and as Fred saw there was a girl with Larry he took no chance because he thought the girl might be your sister."

At that moment, Betty's brother Jack came bustling into the hall and went up to the library door.

"Gee, Sis," he burst out, with the air of one who has big news to tell, "Markham came deuced near being a scrambled egg instead of a hard-boiled one. In spite of Betty's wail of protest, he added, "But, instead of staying in the hospital, he made them take him home. The briefest pause, insisted he was all right, notwithstanding his broken ribs."

"You're kidding," said Betty, "but I'm not sure you're not kidding me. You're sure you have forgiven me and that your happiness is greater than your own?"

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